

From: Colonel Jerry Wellman, UTWG CC

Subject: Wing CC's NESAs experience
Fellow commanders (and others),

I've just returned from NESAs and wanted to share a couple of observations with you... [an unpaid, unrequested commentary about NESAs] ...

First. I met many members from many wings and YOUR members are simply outstanding. They are examples of highly motivated and dedicated members. Quite simply, you should be proud of your members at NESAs. I saw examples of integrity, respect and dedication to excellence. Please express to your wing members who attended NESAs a hearty thanks for the great examples they were to me!

Second. If you have anyone serving as staff members at NESAs...these people are pure gold. Not only are they subject matter experts, they are, again, examples of outstanding dedication to CAP and of service to others. Whether you were a new member or a seasoned CAP veteran, the NESAs staff took the time to instruct and assist in any way to ensure a positive learning experience. I saw instructors willing to stay late and work one-on-one with a senior or cadet to ensure a concept was learned or a test properly passed. There was great attention to detail and learning. I saw first-hand that this is not a "check-off" process, but an experience to educate and ensure students come away with solid knowledge and understanding. The staff explained the "why" of our procedures and processes -- enabling students to understand and not just be told to "comply or else."

Comment.

When I arrived, as a student, in an extremely hot and humid environment, found my assigned bed in an open-bay barracks and visited the chow hall, I thought, "What have I gotten myself into?" The days started about 0530 and often extended to 2030. (Did I say it was hot and humid?) By Friday I was wishing I could have stayed another week. I came away with a changed perspective of NESAs. All around I watched cadets and seniors eager to learn and participate. Everyone I talked to said this was a worthwhile activity and that they learned a great deal. Seniors and cadets were positive, safe, polite and eager to make friends and help each other. The food was good, I slept better than I often do at home, I worked hard, read a lot of material, got out in the field and experienced my first chigger bite, made a LOT of great friends, learned a LOT about how other wings do "stuff," and had a great time. I would count this as a highlight (not as good as IACE) of my 40 years' in CAP. (Did I mention it was hot and humid?)

One lesson I learned is that I need to ensure members returning from NESAs are invited to be more involved in teaching others in the wing and are given opportunities to participate (and take the lead) in ES activities and missions. NESAs-trained members really know their stuff!

Please express appreciation to your members who attended (and have attended) and who serve (or who have served) in any staff role. Their selfless service is a wonderful example!

Jerry Wellman
Commander, Utah Wing